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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **New Study Shows Drug Courts Save Taxpayers More Than \$90 Million Annually**

### ***Reduced Rate of Recidivism Reported In Four-Year Study***

San Francisco—A new study shows that California drug courts bring significant cost benefits and could save California taxpayers more than \$90 million annually due to reduced costs of victimization and savings for justice system agencies. Another consequence of drug courts is lower rates of recidivism that will help reduce the crime rate and promote public safety, according to the study.

Part of a nationwide movement, drug courts offer an alternative to traditional criminal justice prosecution of drug offenders by combining treatment of alcohol and drug abuse with close judicial supervision.

Conducted by the Judicial Council of California's Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee with NPC Research of Portland, Oregon, the four-year study, *California Drug Courts: A Methodology for Determining Costs and Benefits*, examined the costs and benefits of nine drug courts in seven counties. Key findings include:

- The average rearrest rate of drug court graduates was 17 percent, compared to 29 percent of all drug court participants and 41 percent of those subject to the traditional court process.
- Taxpayers realized a total cost savings of more than \$9 million based on the study courts alone. With an estimated 90 adult drug courts in California, taxpayers can expect to save more than \$90 million annually.
- For most criminal justice system agencies, the cost invested in drug courts was less than the cost of traditional court processing. This can be attributed to case-processing efficiencies that drug courts allow.

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- In the majority of drug courts studied, the net “investment” was less than \$ 3,000 per participant, with most costs tied to probation and treatment programs. The average savings from fewer rearrests of drug court participants was \$11,000 per participant, a substantial savings.
- Both drug court participants *and* the comparison group accessed treatment services as a condition of probation. Drug court participants were more likely than the comparison group to access services during their probation and to continue treatment *after* their probation was completed.

The trial courts participating in the study were the Superior Courts of Los Angeles (Central and El Monte Drug Courts), San Diego (East County Drug Court), Orange (Santa Ana and Laguna Niguel Drug Courts), Butte, San Joaquin, Monterey, and Stanislaus Counties.

This is the second in a three-phase study being conducted for the Judicial Council of California and its staff agency, the Administrative Office of the Courts. The final phase of the study, the development of the drug court Cost Self Evaluation Tool (CSET) will be tested and launched statewide later this year. CSET will assist courts in determining their costs and benefits.

The study, *California Drug Courts: A Methodology for Determining Costs and Benefits*, is online: [http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/documents/drug\\_court\\_phase\\_II.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/documents/drug_court_phase_II.pdf) . A summary of the study is available at [http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/documents/cost\\_study\\_research\\_summary.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/documents/cost_study_research_summary.pdf) For more information about the project phases go to [www.npcresearch.com](http://www.npcresearch.com).

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